

REPORT

INFORMATION REPORT

COUNTRY

~~SECRET~~ (Stalingrad) (blast)

SUBJECT

1. Air Activity near Stalingrad
2. Stalingrad, Gumrak, and Dzerzhinsk Airfields

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CLASSIFICATION **CONFIDENTIAL**COUNTRY **USSR** REPORTTOPIC **Air Observation in Stalingrad; Stalingrad, Gumrak and Dzherzhinsk Airfield** 25X1
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1. In August 1950, an airfield was observed to be located west of the Gumrak railroad station (4848 N/4422 E), along the southwest side of a railroad line toward the north. After about the fall of 1951, individual jet aircraft with swept-back wings or flying in formations of three

25X1

25X1

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25X1

- 2 -

were seen aloft in the area between Gumrak and the PW camps in Stalingrad (4845 N/4431 E) and over the Tsaritsa Glen. They came from the direction of Gumrak and followed the Tsaritsa Glen. Not before the late fall of 1952 did it become apparent that the jet planes might be stationed at the airfield located near Gumrak. Although no take-offs and landings were directly observed, the kind of flying activity seen supported this assumption. The jet aircraft were always seen flying from the direction of Gumrak along the Tsaritsa Glen to the eastern bank of the Volga River. After several turns and power dives over the town and subsequent steep climbs, they flew toward Gumrak. The aircraft were seen for about 15 to 20 minutes. When flying in formation of three, the aircraft made several turns over the town and returned toward Gumrak. No other type aircraft or flying activity was noticed near Gumrak. 1

2. The first jet aircraft were seen in the air space over Stalingrad after the fall of 1950. They usually flew individually, at high altitudes and often emitted vapor trails. After 1951, individual jet aircraft with two vapor trails were occasionally seen flying at very altitudes. After May 1953, considerably more jet aircraft were seen in the air space over Stalingrad. They flew mostly in two-ship elements or loose formation of 5 or 6 flights, flying turns over the town. After May 1953 flying activity by jet aircraft was conducted in fair weather and below 1,000 meters. They flew in two-ship elements, one aircraft length apart. When flying in large formations, they spread out and flew unusually wide turns. A jet aircraft seen flying an inclination angle of the flight path in early May 1953 had a remarkable step in the fuselage. These observations were made with jet aircraft at night flying in August or September 1952. The aircraft were not stationed at one of the airfields known in the Stalingrad area. They always approached from a northerly direction and, upon flying over the town area, again turned northward. 1

On two subsequent days in early September 1952, about 100 four-engine conventional aircraft in formations of from five to seven were aloft over Stalingrad. The individual formations flew at an altitude of about 4,000 meters in irregular order. They approached from the south and turned over Stalingrad at an estimated angle of about 345°.

It was frequently noticed that regular broadcasts by radio Stalingrad were interrupted because of an announcement of letter group "S G". Since these letters were usually given during bad weather or at night, it was assumed that aircraft approached Stalingrad taking bearings on the Stalingrad transmitter. 2

On the occasion of Air Force Day in August 1953, two formations of about nine DC-3 aircraft each approached Stalingrad in close formation from the north and dropped about 20 parachutists each over Stalingrad airfield from an altitude of about 300 meters.

In July 1952, a helicopter, which allegedly belonged to a Moscow motion picture corporation, repeatedly took off or landed at the Volga-Don Canal in order to take pictures of the sluice installations.

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- 3 -

3. In December 1952 and January 1953, an airfield of an estimated 3 x 3 km was observed to be located 2 or 3 km northeast of Gumrak airfield. At the time of observation, a take-off and landing strip of about 1,200 to 1,500 meters was cleared from snow at the northwest end of the landing field. The location of the cleared strip corresponded with the direction of approach of the aircraft taking off and landing at the field. Not less than two large hangars and other brick buildings were located along the northeastern border of the field which was bordered by a road. An iron lattice mast about 25 meters high and braced by ropes was apparently located immediately outside the airfield, on the extension of the northwest-southeast diagonal through the field. It seemed that the installation was either the Stalingrad radio broadcasting station or the radio station which transmitted the radio signals "S G".

The airfield was usually used only by commercial aircraft which maintained regular air line traffic; that is from 4 to 6 aircraft flew the line daily. It seemed that also at night, 1 or 2 commercial aircraft regularly approached the field. It was remarkable that commercial flying activity decreased during the winter months. No air activity was noticed during IFR weather conditions. After IFR weather conditions of long duration, which was very seldom in the Stalingrad area, air activity by commercial aircraft increased to an unusual extent, with up to 20 commercial aircraft being aloft daily. Then, flying gradually dropped to normal traffic.

Commercial aircraft were of type DC-3 and, after about 1953, mostly of type IL-12. No four-engine commercial planes were seen making intermediate landings in Gumak.

During the months of August and September 1952, nightflying with jet aircraft was conducted for about 4 weeks during clear nights from Gumrak airfield. The landing at Gumrak airfield was definitely noticed from the PW hospital. Flying was conducted with position lights at low altitudes and also at altitudes of between 1,000 and 1,500 meters, first by individual aircraft which were aloft over Stalingrad for about 30 to 40 minutes. Later, two-ship elements of two simultaneously were aloft, flying in wide-spread order. During these air activities, Gumrak airfield was heavily illuminated, and the letters "S G" were frequently broadcast over radio Stalingrad. On starry nights, the reddish glow from jet tailpipes below the aircraft fuselage ^{was} clearly visible. The aircraft had an estimated horizontal speed of about 500 to 600 km/ph.

During the period of night flying, small groups of Soviet Air Force officers in the rank of captain or major were observed in Stalingrad. They were between 24 and 26 years of age, tall, and of well-groomed appearance. Their uniform consisted of dark-khaki colored trousers and jackets and visor caps with rich golden embroidery. They wore a short dagger on a pouchbelt and were generally referred to as Turbochniki from Moscow. They made a far better appearance than the air force personnel usually seen in Stalingrad. After September 1952 up to September 1953, night flying or daytime flying by jet aircraft were no longer observed from Gumrak. 1

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4. In February and March 1953, Soviet soldiers complained that they had to build structures at Gumrak airfield despite the heavy cold and that these structures had to be completed by spring. Officers allegedly stated that these installations were to serve the take-off of small aircraft occupied by one pilot, and that the aircraft were to be employed against enemy aircraft at high altitudes. It seemed that the planes were to take off by means of compressed air or the like immediately prior to the approach of enemy aircraft. No confirmatory observations were made up to late September 1953, however. 3
5. Activity at Stalingrad-I airfield concentrated on premilitary training of youths and exercises of discharged Soviet Air Force pilots. Subjects of training at the field were elementary courses for pilots, training of gliders in airplane towing, individual parachute jumping with single and double parachutes from biplanes, and stunt flying which included loops, recoveries, sharp banks and rolls. 4
6. On several subsequent days in October 1952, individual biplanes took off and landed at an uncultivated steppe area south of the premises of the Zavod aluminum plant. A DC-3 made an intermediate landing during the same period. No air activity was noticed there after that time. 7
7. In 1952, a Soviet major stated that a school for jet aircraft pilots was located in Kuibyshev (5311 N/5010 E) and that many accidents occurred, with the aircraft frequently crashing from altitudes of 100 and 150 meters.
8. In the spring of 1952, a single jet aircraft for the first time was observed taking off from an area near Gumrak, where an airfield was assumed to be stationed. After that time, individual jet aircraft or, occasionally, 6 jet aircraft were seen taking off at short intervals, mostly on three subsequent days during the week. Fellow PWs stated that "fast jet aircraft" were stationed at the field near Gumrak. The aircraft mentioned had swept-back wings but no auxiliary gas tanks were seen. A light sports plane regularly took off from Gumrak airfield and subsequently practiced stunt flying in the air space over the Volga River for 30 minutes. Piston-engine biplanes and twin-engine aircraft also took off from the field near Gumrak in addition to the jet aircraft. 1

It appeared that elementary training for pilots was conducted at Stalingrad-I airfield. 4

9. School flying and parachute jumping were observed at Stalingrad-I airfield. Especially from the summer up to September 1953, single jet aircraft, individually, in two-ship elements or in some instances in flights were seen aloft at an altitude of 1,500 to 3,000 meters from the PW hospital during the early morning hours and in the late afternoons. They came from a northwesterly direction and flew at a speed of about 800 km/ph. They flew wide turns over the Stalingrad area and turned toward the Northwest. The fact that the aircraft were always observed climbing from the northwest, reaching the maximum altitude over the Stalingrad air space and descending again toward the northwest, it was inferred that their home base was located northwest of Stalingrad. The jet aircraft had swept-back wings and high set horizontal stabilizer. The landing gear was always retracted over the PW hospital.¹ On two days in the summer of 1953, a twin-jet aircraft was seen from the hospital approaching from a northerly direction. The aircraft turned toward the north after a wide turn over Stalingrad. The jet engines were fitted on either side below the wings at the fuselage. The wings were less swept back than those of the single jet aircraft. The appearance of twin-jet aircraft were the topic of conversation for several days. 6

25X1

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10. Between June and late September 1953, an airfield was observed 4 or 5 km north of the Dzerzhinski tractor plant on the northeastern perimeter of Stalingrad. A three-meter metalled road led toward the north from Stalingrad via the settlement of the tractor plant and a ravine north of the plant. About 1 km north of the ravine, the road turned toward the northeast. An asphalt road, 10 meters wide, branched off the aforementioned road toward the north. The asphalt road was completed about off the southern border of the aluminum plant which was located about 300 meters west of the road and about 1,500 to 2,000 meters west of the airfield. The area of the airfield consisted of flat steppe with low brushwork. The buildings of the aluminum plant were not higher than 15 meters. A long-distance line led northward through the area from Stalingrad. The airfield ~~assumed~~ to be an advance airfield. activity was first observed there in May 1953. Prior to September 1953, 2 or three ~~temporary~~ buildings were constructed immediately near the field. The about 50 to 70 construction workers working near the field wore Soviet green fatigue uniform with garrison caps. They did not wear epaulets or branch-of-service insignia. The field had no borders. The landing field was covered with steppe grass. No runways, taxiways and hangars were available. Several camouflaged tents were erected at the southern border of the field. Flying was also conducted in rainy weather. Little air activity was observed. Only biplanes were observed. They flew individually. Only once was a two-ship element observed flying tight circles over the field. Air Force officers riding in sedans and trucks were frequently seen on the road between Stalingrad and the aluminum plant. They wore new dress uniforms with lapels and black neckties. 67

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11. In the summer of 1951, the first jet aircraft with swept-back wings and without fuselage steps were seen in the air space over Stalingrad. They were observed there until the end of the period of observation in September 1953. Until that time, air activity by turbo jet planes currently increased. The aircraft flew individually or in elements of two at an altitude of 600 meters. They approached the western perimeter of the town, where an airfield was assumed to be located, flew over Camp No 6124/1 and the town in an easterly direction. After a short time, they returned encircled the western town area presumably, to land. No pursuit or attack exercises were noticed. Regular take-offs and landings by passenger planes were observed from the aforementioned airfield and another located nearby. The aircraft made several turns over the assumed airfield prior to landing. It could not be determined whether the turbo-jet aircraft and piston-engine aircraft were stationed on one and the same airfield. 1

In the summer of 1952, cargo gliders towed by twin-engine conventional aircraft were several times seen aloft. They apparently landed in the same area west of the town. No such aircraft were seen there after that time. A sports plane which engaged in stunt flying was mostly seen there during the summer months. Parachute jumping over, or near, the western perimeter of the town increased considerably in 1953. During the summer months, especially at nightfall, about 6 men each with a conventional white parachute were dropped from an altitude of about 500 meters, presumably from twin-engine aircraft. Only once were there aircraft observed from which the men jumped at a time. Parachute jumping was conducted at irregular intervals. The jumping area was located near the area of the jet aircraft or commercial aircraft airfield. No unusually intensive air activity was observed over Stalingrad. 5

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- 6 -

1. Comment. The report indicates that, at least in 1952, the Stalingrad-Gumrak airfield was occupied by a Soviet jet aircraft unit. [redacted] did not observe turbo-jet flying in Gumrak after September 1952. [redacted] that jet aircraft were seen until their departure in September 1953. It is possible, that the airfield served civilian traffic up to late 1951 and was then occupied by a Soviet jet aircraft regiment. The jet aircraft with steps in the fuselages [redacted] were presumably Yak-23s. These aircraft obviously were not stationed in the Stalingrad area. The jet aircraft [redacted] presumably were MiG-15s which are stationed in Gumrak. 25X1
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2. [redacted] 25X1
3. Comment. The vague description of the structures under construction at Gumrak airfield does not allow definite conclusions. The structures may have been catapult installations for intercept service. 25X1
4. Comment. It is known that preilitary training is conducted at Stalingrad-I airfield, which had hitherto been referred to as Stalingrad-North airfield. 25X1
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5. Comment. [redacted] failed to distinguish air activity at Gumrak and Stalingrad-I airfields. 25X1
6. Comment. The fact that twin-jet aircraft allegedly with more or less swept back wings were observed in the USSR and also in the satellite states is of interest. However, there has not been sufficient information received on this subject as yet to arrive at any conclusion. [redacted] have been seeing aircraft of type Il-28 or MiG-15 with auxiliary gasoline tanks. This type of information must be traced very carefully. 25X1
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7. Comment. Contrary to previous assumptions, Stalingrad-Gorodizhskhe (48°50'N/44°35'E) airfield was not taken out of operation. [redacted] The aluminum plant was constructed west of the airfield. 25X1
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